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# MEETING THE RAISIN STANDARDS

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## **marketing order standards of quality and condition**

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MARKETING ORDER STANDARDS OF QUALITY AND CONDITION?**

To help producers and handlers maintain raisins of such uniform quality and wholesomeness that they will be readily accepted by consumers and buyers. This, in turn, is intended to create a more stable market and improve the earnings of the raisin industry.

### **WHO SETS THE MARKETING ORDER MINIMUM GRADE AND CONDITION STANDARDS?**

The Raisin Administrative Committee which represents producers and handlers, with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture.

### **WHEN AND HOW WERE MINIMUM GRADE AND CONDITION STANDARDS MADE A PART OF THE MARKETING ORDER?**

In 1955 the Raisin Administrative Committee proposed that the Federal Raisin Marketing Order be amended to include (a) minimum grade and condition standards for both incoming deliveries of natural condition raisins from producers and outgoing shipments of processed raisins from handlers, and (b) inspection to determine compliance with the standards. The proposed amendment was considered at a public hearing in Fresno, California; approved by the Secretary of Agriculture; and approved by producers in a referendum. The amendment became effective September 1, 1955.

### **HOW MANY MARKETING ORDER STANDARDS OF QUALITY AND CONDITION ARE THERE?**

Two--a minimum standard for natural condition raisins and a minimum standard for processed raisins. Raisins failing to meet either are called "off-grade."

### **HOW MAY THE MARKETING ORDER STANDARDS BE CHANGED?**

By the Raisin Administrative Committee (RAC) with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture.

### **SHOULD THE PRODUCER BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROCESSED RAISIN (THE PACKER'S OUTGOING) STANDARDS?**

Yes, because they set the minimum quality of raisins that will reach the housewife, the baker and other users of raisins. The minimum standards for processed raisins are more restrictive than for natural condition raisins. Packers must receive a certain level of natural condition raisins; otherwise they cannot meet the outgoing standards under normal processing operations.

### **USING THOMPSON SEEDLESS VARIETY AS AN EXAMPLE, COMPARE THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE TWO STANDARDS--NATURAL CONDITION AND PROCESSED.**

Both standards require that the raisins must:

- be from sound, wholesome, at least fairly mature grapes;
- be free from active infestation;
- have a normal characteristic color, flavor and odor; and,
- not exceed the limits specified in the following table:

Quality Characteristic	Natural Condition (Incoming)*	Processed (Outgoing)
Moisture content	16% maximum	18% maximum
Uncured berries	5%	none
Mold	5%	4%
Fermentation	none	none
Grit, sand, silt	trace	trace
Sandburs, Eucalyptus leaves, pods	none	none
Pieces of stems	no limit	4 per 96 oz.
Cap stems	no limit	35 per 16 oz.
Total substandard berries	12%	8%
of which undeveloped	6%	2%
Total damage	10% maximum including not more than -	5% maximum including not more than -
Sunburn	5%	5%
Caramelization	5%	5%
Sugaring	5%	**

\* Except for maximum moisture content, the percentages shown are the guidelines used by the Inspection Service in interpreting the requirements of the Marketing Order standards for natural condition raisins and have been approved by the Raisin Administrative Committee.

\*\* Processed (outgoing) raisins may contain a maximum of 15 percent sugaring, in addition to other damage.

### **WHAT ARE THE SO-CALLED FOOD AND DRUG DEFECTS?**

These defects include insect damage, insect and rodent contamination, mold, rot, fermenta-





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tion, embedded sand, foreign material such as sandburs, Eucalyptus leaves and pods, and other objectionable substances.

#### WHAT IS THE TOLERANCE FOR THESE FOOD AND DRUG DEFECTS?

The Food and Drug Act does not provide tolerances for these defects. However, in administering the Act, the Food and Drug Administration gives consideration to the capability of the industry as a whole to produce sound, wholesome raisins. The USDA Inspection Service, in applying the Marketing Order standards, recognizes these same principles and follows guidelines consistent with those of the Food and Drug Administration.

#### USDA Inspection Service

3529 East Tulare Street, Fresno, California 93702

Phone: 266-8071, Ext. 341

#### WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THE INSPECTION SERVICE UNDER THE MARKETING ORDER?

To determine whether or not raisins meet the minimum quality and condition standards established under the Marketing Order and to perform related services for the benefit of industry.

#### HOW LONG HAS USDA BEEN INSPECTING RAISINS?

Packed raisins in sizable volumes since 1938 and natural condition raisins since 1949.

#### ARE MOST OF THE INSPECTORS NEW EACH YEAR?

No, about 80 percent return from the previous year.

#### HOW ARE INSPECTORS TRAINED?

By a combination of study material, classroom instruction, and on-the-job training. At the beginning of the season, you may see extra inspectors (trainees) working on the incoming loads with experienced inspectors. This is an important part of their "on-the-job" training.

#### ARE INSPECTORS INSTRUCTED IN ALL THE MARKETING ORDER PROVISIONS?

No, only on the minimum grade and condition standards and those things that affect these standards--such as storage, sanitation and reconditioning. Questions on producer options and other provisions of the Order should be directed to the RAC Manager, the Raisin Administrative Committee or the handler.

#### inspection procedures

#### WHAT ARE THE BASIC STEPS IN INSPECTION OF NATURAL CONDITION RAISINS?

- (1) Check for infestation and rodent contamination.
- (2) Make visual examination of the raisins to determine if the load obviously meets or if it should be segregated into a "meeting" portion and a "suspect" or "failing" portion.
- (3) Make detailed analysis of samples drawn from "failing" or "suspect" lots to determine more accurately the extent of defects.
- (4) Certify "meeting" lots to RAC.
- (5) Issue memorandum reports on all "failing" lots. It is the policy of the Inspection Service to show on the memorandum report the specific reasons why the lots failed. A producer may obtain a copy of this report from the handler.

#### WHY ARE "FAILING" BOXES SEGREGATED?

To eliminate the possibility of such boxes causing the entire load to fail.

#### WHAT HAPPENS TO "FAILING" BOXES OF RAISINS?

These raisins may be returned to the producer for removal of defects or held by the handler for reconditioning.

#### WHAT IS MEANT BY "ANALYZE SAMPLES"?

Using standard laboratory procedures to determine the extent of defects--for example, the boil test for mold or the microscope for vinegar fly eggs. These laboratory tests enable the

inspector to determine more accurately the quality of the raisins than would be possible without such tests and often to pass lots that would otherwise fail.

#### WHY WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING THAT CAN'T BE SEEN WITH THE "NAKED EYE" TEST?

The Marketing Order standards--as well as the Federal and State pure food laws--require raisins to be clean and wholesome. Moreover, in order to maintain consumer confidence that raisins are a wholesome food, it is necessary to make sure that raisins do not contain offensive foreign materials. "Naked eye" testing will detect large, whole insects and similar objectionable materials. But certain types of defects, such as vinegar fly and rodent contamination, cannot be detected with the naked eye. In years such as 1961, when bunch rot was prevalent--with accompanying *Drosophila* egg and larvae infestation--it is necessary to use the microscope to a greater extent than in other years.

#### ARE ANY CHECKS MADE ON THE INSPECTOR?

Yes, inspectors are periodically checked by an experienced supervisor. Normally, one out of every four "meeting" loads is given a detailed analysis without the inspector knowing which loads will be checked. This enables the Inspection Service to keep an accurate record of his performance. Also, direct supervisory checks are made while the inspector is examining the load.

#### WHAT IF THE PRODUCER DISAGREES WITH THE RESULTS OF THE INSPECTION OF HIS RAISINS?

The producer, as well as the packer, has the right to appeal the inspection. The appeal is handled directly by the Fresno Inspection Office of the Consumer and Marketing Service, using experienced supervisory inspectors to perform the appeal. The producer may see the results of the detailed analysis after it is completed.

#### DO INSPECTION PROCEDURES CHANGE DURING A SEASON?

As a rule, no. There have been a few exceptional circumstances, such as the scoring of mold, when minor corrections were made to benefit the industry. No procedure changes will be made without the RAC being informed.

#### □ HOW TO MEET THE STANDARDS

#### WHAT MUST BE DONE TO PRODUCE "MEETING" RAISINS?

Basically, you should lay only sound grapes, dry and cure properly, discard damaged bunches, practice good farm sanitation, use adequate protection on the farm and fumigate during storage.

#### WHAT IS "BUNCH ROT" AND HOW IS IT CONTROLLED?

Bunch rot is a fungus infection which results in a breakdown of the grapes and attracts vinegar flies and dried fruit beetles. Fungicides have little value as a control, but a dry sulphur program during the growing season will help substantially. Discarding bunch rot during picking, traying, and boxing will help control vinegar flies which not only contaminate the raisins but also spread fungus.

#### CAN VINEGAR FLIES BE CONTROLLED?

Vinegar fly population has been greatly reduced by the proper use of insecticides. Contact your Farm Advisor for information on the type of insecticide to use and recommended application.

#### WHY COVER AND FUMIGATE RAISINS AFTER BOXING?

To prevent raisins from being contaminated by insects and rodents. Proper protection at all

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times is most important. Tests have proved that the longer raisins are held on the farm without proper protection the more likely they are to fail because of rodent contamination.

#### HOW MAY A PRODUCER KEEP UP TO DATE ON RECOMMENDED PRODUCTION AND HANDLING PRACTICES?

By consulting your Farm Advisor, the Raisin Advisory Committee, the University of California, the USDA Stored-Products Insects Branch laboratory in Fresno, and the USDA Inspection Service--all of whom have helpful information available.

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